

Watershed Protection – Draft Guidelines

North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit

Applications that contribute to protection of these resources are likely Watershed Protection projects

- Classification (main and supplemental) of any waters on site
 - Outstanding Resource Water (ORW)
 - High Quality Water (HQW)
 - Water Supply (WS)
 - Trout (Tr)
- Susceptibility rating
 - Division of Environmental Health Public Water Supply, Source Water Assessment and Protection of drinking water supplies
- Headwaters
- Groundwater recharge areas
- Wetlands Connectivity (site connected to other sites of high value)
- Natural Heritage Program listed species (aquatic and terrestrial)
- Prime agricultural soils
- Ecologically intact riparian and wetland buffers
- Public Access
- Impaired waters
- Watershed, Source Water or Wellhead Protection plans
- Connectivity to watershed protection/restoration sites
 - Size is an important consideration, and properties of lesser area will receive extra scrutiny for watershed protection benefits

The DENR Water Services Assessment – one aspect of the One NC Naturally Conservation Planning Tool -- may be helpful to applicants in locating proximity of a site to most of the above resources. Please see <http://www.onencnaturally.org/Conservation_Planning_Tool.html>

Characteristics of applications that are less likely to be reviewed favorably

- Uses that degrade water quality or impair other site uses
- Only site use protections are those required by law
- Environmental benefit is minor
- Extensive impervious surface
- Future land use management changes in the watershed will be detrimental to water quality

An emphasis on larger acreages for all characteristics may be considered, as that could translate to significant portions of a “watershed”, and/or greater positive impact on headwaters or groundwater recharge areas. Of course, not all critical resources are extensive in area. In either case, it would be expected that a watershed protection project would contain very limited, if any, impervious surface, and minimal soil disturbance. Allowances for hydrologic modification, water withdrawal, and other potential impacts to

ground and surface waters will be scrutinized. These and other similar impacts should be addressed in the instrument of transfer. Reviewer would expect the project to feature natural drainage pattern and natural groundcover (e.g. riparian and wetland buffers forested with native woody vegetation), and following the recommendations of Clean Water Management Trust Fund and Water Services Assessment, a 300-foot riparian zone or the 100-year flood plain (whichever is greater) has been identified as a priority for conservation.

Maps that would help Division of Water Quality reviewer include:

1. Delineation of the watershed that the donation is protecting. This can be a smaller watershed (i.e., 14 digit HUC). In some cases, this could be a large map, where the watershed will be considerably larger than the site itself.
2. Location of existing and proposed development in the watershed to be protected.